DURHAM
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CITY OF MEDICINE

CITY OF DURHAM | NORTH CAROLINA

Date: April 15, 2011

To: Thomas J. Bonfield, City Manager

Through: Theodore L. Voorhees, Deputy City Manager

From: Jim Soukup, D.E.C.C. Director

Subject: Locution Systems Contract

Executive Summary

Current dispatch procedures for Fire and Emergency Medical Services (E.M.S involve the taking of the information from a 9-1-1 Communication Officer who assigns a priority and routes to the appropriate dispatch station(s). The 9-1-1 Communication Officer then follows the necessary steps to dispatch the units to the event. This involves a quick read sequencing of apparatus and can result in seconds being lost in order to accomplish. Technology is available which would automate the process between the time a call is routed to dispatch and the time it is announced to responding units. Locutions Systems Inc. has developed a process whereby Fire and E.M.S. vehicles are immediately dispatched when routed. This eliminates the time it takes someone to pull up the call, read the narrative and dispatch the appropriate apparatus. This technology interfaces with the Emergency Communications Computer-Aided-Dispatch system to generate an accent neutral computer voice of the proper department and units. Several larger cities have utilized this technology with successful results and a list of clients includes cities such as Seattle, Chicago, as well as Raleigh, NC. Locution Systems Inc. currently is the only company providing this solution.

Recommendation

To authorize the City Manager to execute contracts and other documents with Locution Systems Inc. for the purchase of an Automated Radio Voice Dispatching system in the amount of $181,400 with a recurring annual maintenance fee of $11,525 payable from the Emergency Telephone System Surcharge fund, without competitive bidding as authorized by G.S. 143-129 (e)(6) on the grounds that the products are available from only one source of supply.

Background
The Emergency Communications Center has a goal to dispatch all high priority Fire and E.M.S. calls in ninety (90) seconds or less from the moment the telephone call is received. During peak periods when multiple calls are occurring this can becoming challenging due to elevated levels of radio traffic. During these high volume periods, the 911 Communication Officer has to multi-task between responding to requests from units enroute to previously dispatched calls and to the dispatching of calls being sent to the station queue. This proposed solution will improve the time it takes dispatch Fire and E.M.S. to events by relieving the dispatch station of the initial dispatch responsibility.

Issues/Analysis
This contract will provide the means to optimize the time required to dispatch Fire and E.M.S. vehicles to calls for service. The system fully integrates with the Motorola Radio Gold Elite radio consoles as well as the Sunguard HTE OSSI Computer-Aided-Dispatch (C.A.D.) system. This automated dispatch system is in use by some of the larger cities in the country and it has significantly facilitated the overall reduction of response times.

Alternatives
The alternative would be to continue to dispatch Fire and E.M.S units the same as we currently do. However, this automated process virtually takes the place of a person and has the possibility of reducing the need for additional personnel to manage future workload issues.

Financial Impact
The cost of the system is eligible from the Emergency Telephone System Surcharge budget. There is no impact to the General Fund. Automated digital voice dispatching software was added to the State 911Eligible Expenditure List on February 25, 2011 and the Locution System solution has been further verified with the State 911 Board as being an allowable expense. Locution Systems Inc. is a sole source provider of this type of system and a letter is attached attesting to this.

SDBE Summary
This is a sole-source contract. It was not reviewed by the Department of Equal Opportunity/Equity Assurance for compliance with the Ordinance to Promote Equal Business Opportunities in City Contracting.